

Message Text

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64

ACTION EUR-12

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R 301457Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASH DC 6194

SECDEF WASHDC

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SECDEF FOR SECY OF NAVY MIDDENDORF

1. DURING JUNE 30 MEETING WITH DCM DEFENSE STATE SECRETARY STEMERDINK INDICATED THAT HE HAD MADE DECISION IN FAVOR OF GON PURCHASE OF P-3C ORION AIRCRAFT BUT PREFERRED NOT TO SIGN LETTER OF INTENT WHILE DUTCH PARLIAMENT WAS IN RECESS. HE CONTEMPLATES SIGNING LETTER OF INTENT (FOR AN INITIAL BUY OF FOUR TO SIX AIRCRAFT ACCORDING TO MAAG SOURCES) SHORTLY AFTER PARLIAMENT RECONVENES ON AUGUST 26, INFORM THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE OF THE SECOND CHAMBER OF HIS ACTION, AND WAIT ABOUT TWO WEEKS TO SEE IF IT HAS ANY REACTION. IF NOT, HE WILL THEN FORWARD THE SIGNED LETTER OF INTENT TO US AUTHORITIES. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, STEMERDINK CLARIFIED THAT THIS PROCEDURE DID NOT CONSTITUTE SEEKING PARLIAMENT'S APPROVAL FOR THE P-3C ORION PURCHASE BUT SIMPLY REPRESENTED THE PROCEDURE HE NORMALLY FOLLOWED ON MAJOR MATERIEL PURCHASES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONS WITH THE POLITICIANS.

2. COMMENT:ALTHOUGH WE HAD HOPED TO HAVE THE P-3C ORION PURCHASE WRAPPED UP WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY, IT WOULD BE BEST IN OUR JUDGMENT NOT TO PUSH STEMERDINK ANY FURTHER ON THIS. FURTHERMORE, IT IS DEFINITELY IN THE US INTEREST FOR HIM TO STAY ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HIS OWN PARTY WHICH HAS BY FAR THE LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT GROUP IN THE SECOND CHAMBER. STEMERDINK, FOR INSTANCE, PLAYED A USEFUL

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ROLE IN DEFUSING SOME OF THE LABOR PARTY PARLIAMENTARY

GROUP'S IRE AGAINST DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING FOR HIS
DECISION TO BUY THE F-16 AND BY SEEING TO IT THAT THE LABOR
PARTY PARLIAMENTARY MOTION CRITICAL OF THE F-16 DECISION
HAD NO SHARP TEETH IN IT.

3. ACCORDING TO OUR NETHERLANDS NAVY SOURCES, GON MAY SIGN
A LETTER OF INTENT WITHIN A FEW DAYS, BUT DELAY
SIGNING THE MORE DEFINITIVE LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE
(I.E. LETTER OF OFFER) UNTIL EARLY SEPTEMBER. THIS IS A
VARIATION ON STEMERDINK'S THEME BUT THE DISCREPANCY IS
PROBABLY MORE SEMANTIC THAN SUBSTANTIVE. IN ANY EVENT,
STEMERDINK'S REMARKS INDICATE THAT THE GON HAS MADE A
POLITICAL DECISION TO BUY THE P-3C ORION AND THAT THERE
ARE NO REMAINING MAJOR OBSTACLES.
GOULD

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